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BOOK REVIEWS.

THE NEW DEMOCRACY. By W. Jethro Brown, M. A., LL. D.
Macmillan & Co. Pp. ix., 215.

This very interesting and well-written book is an appeal for certain reforms and changes as necessary to the health of modern Democracy. The fact that two of the changes suggested have already been achieved in Tasmania, whence the author writes, suggests that the book is rather of local than general interest; on the other hand, it certainly gains by being in actual touch with practical politics. The argument states three defects, and offers three remedies: "modern politics falls into three grand problems—the problems of expression, of character and of union."

To take first the problem of expression—"Demos is dumb," says the author, and the problem of securing an expression of popular opinion is increasing. He quotes from Mr. Godkin that you can never tell what the people will think, and from Mr. Lecky that the "public opinion of a nation is something quite different from the votes that can be extracted from all the individuals who compose it." This failure of the people to express itself he attributes to "the inorganic character of the present system of representation." "The electors of a typical constituency are united by no bonds of kinship, and, indeed, represent every variety of political opinion." The remedy offered lies in an improved form of representation, either in the Referendum (direct democracy), or in "Hare's system" (indirect democracy), and the author sums up very decidedly in favor of the latter.

The ordinary English reader will be disposed to question the statement of this part of the problem. In the first place, is the people really dumb? We may sometimes be unable to *predict* on which side a constituency, or even the whole nation, might vote on a particular occasion; it does not follow that when the time comes the people will not be capable of making its wishes known. But further, a direct vote for or against is not the only, nor always the best, means by which a body of people can express itself. Take, for instance, a complicated code of factory legislation such as comes from time to time before the country. If the whole body of workers and employers interested in it were to

record a vote for or against it as it stood, such a vote might be a most inadequate expression of their will with respect to it. What really takes place is a minute and expert criticism of all its details, expressed (say) by the accredited representatives of the Trade Unions, caught up and repeated and criticised again by the Press, forced upon the attention of the Home Office by deputations and memorials and public meetings; and resulting probably in a modification of the Bill which is more likely to express the wishes of the whole people concerned than either its acceptance or rejection in the original form. Or take again the attitude of the great Friendly Societies or Coöperators; organized bodies which have deliberately avoided political representation. It would be ridiculous to say that these have no means of expression upon measures which affect their interests. Indeed when the question of Old Age Pensions was before the country it is probable that no expression of opinion was so eagerly looked for nor so influential as that of the Friendly Societies.

Nor can we concur in the contempt with which the author, in common with many other reformers, regards the so-called "geographical area" as a basis for representation. The electors of a typical constituency may not be united by "bonds of kinship," but it will be strange indeed if they have no common interests, arising it may be from local industries, local traditions, local characteristics, and above all from local institutions. Nor would it probably be well to abolish these local ties if we could. We may discredit them, as the author does, by calling them the expression of parochialism or provincialism, but the fact remains that they form the best, if not the only school, in which the people is trained to take an intelligent and disinterested share in the wider interests of the community. It is easier for a man to learn the practical difficulties of government, and the necessity for considering all interests, in the affairs of his local vestry or Board of Guardians than in the more complicated and less tangible affairs of state; and the way to educate the people to the wider views and higher ideals which the author so rightly desires is not to get rid of parochialism, but to substitute a truer and wiser parochialism for one which may be selfish or corrupt.

It is because the locality is or may be in this sense a reality, and a most important training school in self-government, that Hare's system of voting does not recommend itself so universally as its admirers would have. Neither experience nor argument,

we are told, has prevented us from adopting it in England, but simply dislike of innovation and allegiance to the spirit of parochialism and the omnipotence of majorities. It would surely have been worth while, before passing such severe strictures, to have analyzed the situation a little more carefully, and to have tried to find in the nature of the facts, if not yet in the minds of men, some better reason of the non-acceptance of the panacea. That better reason undoubtedly exists, though it may not yet have found adequate expression; and we may, I think, find a clue to it in the importance of this very "spirit of parochialism" which is so rashly repudiated by the author. Until a man has learned to work harmoniously with his immediate neighbors, to reconcile his interests with those of the men he is meeting constantly and in different capacities, to realize in their most concrete form both the difficulties and advantages of organized action, he will not properly appreciate, nor be able to judge the greater problems of the State. His neighbors are an organic part of a man's life just so far as he feels himself bound to them by common interests in a common life. The wider and deeper we can make that life, the less likely we are to suffer from the evils of a bad parochialism. If we cut out all interests wider than those of the gas and water supply, and deeper than that of ordinary social intercourse, it will, of course, tend to become narrow and trivial. It sounds well to say that "the tie by local contiguity is to be superseded by the bond of kinship—kinship not of blood, but of ideas"; but ideas that are to be vital and a moving force must stand the test of being brought into the arena of actual daily life. When they have been scoffed at by one neighbor, and supported by another, and modified by a third, and have issued alive, but much mangled from the campaign of a local election, they will be far more powerful and practical than if all their task had been to appreciate an electioneering address in exact accordance with themselves, sent round by an invisible candidate to an invisible constituency.

Nor is it clear that the Hare system brings with it other definite advantages which are claimed for it. "Under the Hare method of voting the extinction of the minority ceases. *Every* elector may have a representative in Parliament." So may every elector now, in just the same sense, if he choose to vote with the majority. It is significant that in the election quoted as illustrating the process in Tasmania half the candidates were rejected,

and some at least of the supporters of those candidates would be unrepresented. For it is really begging the question to say that a man's fifth or sixth preference represents him, when he probably only votes for Five or Six, either to fill up the paper or because he doesn't dislike them so much as he does two others. It may be argued, too, that it is as well that the minority should be unrepresented until they have fought their ideas into a position of dignity. To quote from the author himself, "the wise rule of the strong demands the sustained opposition of the weak. When victory puts an end to strife, the days of good government are numbered,"—and if the minorities are not heard in Parliament they will be all the louder in their constituency.

But, indeed, the Hare system, as worked in Tasmania, might as well be called double representation of majorities, as representation of minorities. For the old "order of merit," or most votes, is substituted a system by which any candidate gaining a certain number of votes is elected, and the votes which he may gain beyond that number are distributed among less fortunate candidates in order to bring up their number of votes to the quota. Upon what principle? X gets the majority of votes, represents, therefore, the majority of voters, and every one who voted for him has his representative. One would expect that under this system the wishes of these electors would now be ignored and the wishes of the minority consulted; but no. The surplus of X's votes is to be distributed in accordance with the *second* preferences of those who have already got one representative, and should the second again have a surplus, then the fortunate majority will again have their third preference consulted and will take part in electing a third candidate. But it does not at all follow that the man liked second best by the majority is the man liked best by the minority. Further, another process of re-distribution also takes place. Suppose that when all the surplus votes are distributed less than the possible number of candidates have obtained the quota; that out of a possible six, only three have obtained the quota, the remaining votes being distributed among nine candidates. Then of these candidates the one who has fewest votes, *i. e.*, represents the minimum minority, is declared out of the running, and his votes are transferred according to the second preferences of the minority. This process is repeated until only the required six are left, each time the man with fewest votes being cut out. So that in the result

the majority may be represented—say—by their three first preferences; the minority by their three last, or not at all.

The chapter on the Study of History as a means of educating public opinion is interesting and true. But History by itself can never be sufficient to qualify the democracy to solve political problems. To trust to it alone would be like teaching chemistry out of a text book and without demonstrations. We must have our political laboratories as well as class-rooms, and these are to be found wherever the people are gathered together for the purposes of common action.

HELEN BOSANQUET.

OXSHOTT, SURREY, ENGLAND.

THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS OF CHRISTIANITY. By John Caird, D. D., LL. D., late Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glasgow, with a memoir by Edward Caird, D. C. L., LL. D., Master of Balliol. Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons. 2 vols.; pp. cxli., 232; 297.

These volumes contain the Gifford Lectures delivered by Principal Caird at Glasgow in sessions 1892-93 and 1895-96. They are printed as they were delivered, without having had the author's revision before publication; but they are not on that account imperfect, except that, if Principal Caird's health had not given way, he might have written two or three additional lectures. The Master of Balliol's brief memoir of his brother is excellently done. Possibly some very fervent admirers of Principal Caird may think that the memoir is too modest, that Mr. Caird has carried his fraternal restraint too far; but if that be a fault, it is a good one. A man's fame stands with the impression which is made by his work, and it may well be questioned whether laudation in a biography has ever much value. The memoir gives us the picture of a strong, quiet nature, growing steadily in thought and power, without crisis or turmoil. The life of Principal Caird was that of a great preacher, teacher and administrator, outwardly uneventful, but ever more and more extensive and deep in its influence. No man in recent times did more to give breadth and sympathy to religious thought in Scotland. As his own spiritual and intellectual development proceeded without any violent breach or turning, and as in doing a revolutionary work he retained a conservative spirit, he was saved from the exaggerations in thought and expression which almost inevitably arise